Morphology, Syntax and Functions of the Kilba Folk Riddles

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Abstract: *A riddle is an important genre of oral literature. Riddling as a game requires mastery and manipulation of language. The game is played through obscuring the subject in order to challenge the answerer. In this study, we examined the morphology, syntax and functions of Kilba folk riddles. The theory of systemic Linguistics was adopted for the study. The syntagmatic and Paradigmatic relations were examined. In addition, the analytic and synthetic approaches were used to investigate the structures of the words. The outcome of the analysis revealed that almost all the different types of sentence are prevalent in the structure of Kilba folk riddles. It was also observed that clauses and groups form vital structures of Kilba folk riddles. The study has also revealed that there are possible choices of language based on the context of riddling. However, the study concluded that such possibility may lead to ambiguity and disputes over the correct answer. Above all, the study has established a fact that riddling as a game is played for different purposes such as entertainment, teaching and testing ingenuity and ability for linguistic creativity.*

Keywords: *Riddle, morphology, syntax, systemic Linguistics, analytical, and synthetic approaches*

1. INTRODUCTION

Riddles are questions or statements that are intentionally worded in puzzling or misleading ways. They are puzzling statements in form of descriptions designed to make a person use his/her creative ingenuity. In other words, they contain descriptive elements or metaphor, which the listener has to puzzle out the solution.

In traditional African communities especially in Nigeria, riddling is an important source of family entertainment. Children would sit around the elders in the family under the moonlight to play riddle games. There is so much fun and laughter associated with this form of family entertainment. In Kilba community, the loser is given a wife or husband, while the winner receives applause as a reward. In order to amuse the audience, the wife or the husband that the questioner will give the answerer used to be the oldest or the most ugly man or woman in the vicinity. At any time a tie is made, the audience will listen attentively to the wife or the husband that the questioner will give. The atmosphere will be filled with laughter if the given husband or wife is very ugly or old. In Nigeria, riddle asking and cracking is an art passed down from generation to generations (Traditional Nigerian Riddles).

Among the Kilba, riddles are mostly in form of statements or direct questions requiring the answerer to provide the connotation. Sometimes the solutions or answers to a framed riddle may not be straight forward as they may be ambiguous-having more than one meaning. Generally, the Kilba folk use Riddling as a game to entertain, test knowledge and aid minor works in the evening like shelling of groundnuts.

Riddling in the then Kilba community was done simultaneously with shelling groundnuts. The game was mainly played by children. Elders only intervene where there is a contradiction over the solution to a riddle. The questioner demonstrates his wisdom by challenging the answerer with a

riddle that he assumes a solution will not be found. The Kilba like many other Nigerian ethnic group draw their riddles from different sources especially natural phenomena e.g. heavenly bodies, landscape features, animals, plants, human body, daily activities or experiences. This relates to   Dr. A. C. Jordan's (1974) assertion that the subject may be anything within common experience—man, parts of the human body, animals, plant life, the heavenly bodies, etc.

Riddling among the Kiba is called "*pək'ətə-pəkətiya mba*" translated as 'tales of tie.' A tie is made if the answerer fails to provide a solution to a thrown riddle. The questioner wins and holds the floor to throw another one. The answerer will always be given a short time to look for the solution to a thrown riddle. When the time given is about to run out, the questioner announces it by setting a bush on fire. Any answer given after the bush has been set on fire is not accepted. It is therefore, common to hear the questioner saying "a *hawu ti ya hu'u ku sarr*" translated as 'I have set the bush on fire.' The bush is set on fire when the questioner says "*Həwu! Həwu! Həwu!*". The answerer at that point should stop guessing the solution.

There is a change of status when a tie is made. The questioner becomes the answerer and the answerer becomes the questioner. The new questioner will demonstrate his own wisdom by throwing riddles that he thinks the former speaker may not find solution to. He gives an older or uglier person than the one given to him at any point he gets the opportunity. The audience will normally clap or laugh more on hearing the revenge made.

2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to examine the Morphology, syntax and functions of Kilba folk riddles.

The specific objectives include:

   (i)   To identify and describe the grammatical structures of the riddles in the corpus

   (ii) To identify and discuss the functions of the riddles in relation to the context in which they are framed.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is a corpus based analysis of the Morphology, Syntax and Functions of the Kilba riddles. The corpus consisted of fifty selected folk riddles of the Kilba People of Adamawa State. The texts were randomly selected from the researcher's collection of Kilba Folk riddles. Descriptive and discursive approach was adopted in order to explain the contextual structuring of the riddles and their answers. Though the riddles could be related to others from the sister tribes such as the Marghi, Bura, Hona and Gibaku (Chibok), the structure and context within which the riddling is done may differ. The Morphological and syntactic structures and the functions of the riddles were discussed with samples from the corpus to support claims.

4. DEFINITIONS OF RIDDLE

Riddles are puzzled descriptive statements or direct questions demanding the answerer to provide the association or connotation. The answerers are not directly asked to guess but are faced an allusive sentence referring analogously to something else, which they must then try to identify (Oral Literature in Africa)

In most riddles, what is required is that the answerer should identify the object indicated in these allusive general statements.

Definitions of the riddle in oral tradition have been primarily based on studies of two types: those concerned with the structure of the riddle either grammatically or in terms of thematic units, and those concerned with cognitive aspect of the riddle, that is, to functions psychologically, sociologically, and intellectually as performed in context(Green and Pepicello 1979).These scholars characterized riddle analysis in terms of structural and cognitive studies which have provided the framework within which the riddle has been defined.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia similarly puts that riddles are of two types: enigmas, which are problems generally expressed in metaphorical or allegorical language that requires ingenuity and careful thinking for the solution, and conundra, which are questions relying for their effects on punning in either the question or the answer.

From the forgoing definitions, it could be concluded that riddles form part of folk culture, especially language use. It involves language manipulation by the questioner in order to confuse the answerer. Riddles are framed using phenomena within a given environment. They are cracked for variety of purposes which include entertainment, teaching of lesson and prove of intelligence.

Riddles are manifestations of Folk literature, and they represent distinct aspect of culture. Scholars study riddles as a form of literary expression by members of a society because riddles reflect the environment and peoples intellectual dexterity. Although riddles are paradoxical, they always have simple and surprise answers. Folk riddles vary in style and syntax according to the environment in which they exist; they deal with topics that reflect the thinking in the area in which they originated. (www.folkculturebh.org/en/index.php?issues)

Riddles as described (by the American folklorist Roger Abrahams)is a traditional form of licensed aggression, since the aim of the questioner is to confuse the listener by giving hints that points to the right answer only in hindsight. The answer to puzzling and seemingly unanswerable questions is arbitrary, surprising and traditional, that is with all possible answers, the questioner, in keeping with tradition, has the power to insist which choice is the right answer. The puzzle arises from the skilful use of speech play, metaphor, and other techniques of obfuscation and misdirection. Nevertheless, riddles can serve various functions such as entertainment, means of teaching values, and a way of socializing the child into the poetics of the society.(good riddles)

5. RIDDLING GAME IN THE ANCIENT KILBA COMMUNITY

Among the oral genres of the Kilba people, folk tale and riddle serve as the most important sources of entertainment. The Riddle Game is a formalized guessing game, a contest of wit and skill in which the players take turns asking riddles. The player that cannot answer loses, while the player that asked the riddle wins. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riddle)

Riddling in the ancient Kilba Community was an important source of entertainment. It was a game played by children which was both entertaining and educating. In the then Kilba Community, it was done commonly in the dry season during moon light times or when sitting round the fire during cold times. The elders remain quiet and only intervene when there is contradiction over the structuring of a thrown riddle or solution to it. The elders play the role of judges. They are vast in riddles and can tell whether a riddle is well structured or not, or whether a given solution is right or wrong. By way of educating the young ones, at a point in time, an elder may seize the floor to throw riddles that the children may not find solution. In this case, no one will be given a wife or husband. The elder will just provide solution to the riddle. Children sometimes request the elders to tell them riddles. In order to amuse the children, an elder may throw a riddle. If the children fail to provide solutions, the elder gives the solution and a wife or husband to any of the children. In order to encourage the children, some elders pretend and give wrong solutions to a riddle thrown by a child. The child will feel proud and give a wife or husband to the elder. The ability to throw many riddles to which solutions are not found makes a child a champion. A child that considers himself a champion may decide to challenge the neighbouring children. The children that desire to be champions normally get close to the elders and request them to tell them a lot of riddles. As one grows up and gathers more riddles, one may also serve as a judge any time the younger ones are throwing riddles.

There is a belief among the Kilba that one will grow horns if one tells a tales or a riddle by day time. It is common to hear a word of caution ***"ə-əng, tələm mo tso kəra ka***!" translated as "take note, you will grow horns! The elders especially reprimand those they hear cracking riddles or telling tales during the daytime. Riddles are rarely told much during the rainy season. This is because most of the time during the rainy season, the children as well as the elders will be tired after retiring from the farm. The rain may also make the ground wet, which may not be conducive for sitting. The riddles are told much during the dry season. In those days, immediately after harvest, the elders as well as the children will have little to do. In the evening, especially during moon light, members of a family use to sit round a fire either made at the centre of the compound or in front of the room of the head of a family called *furr*. The riddles are asked simultaneously with the shelling of ground nuts being the major cash crop of the Kilba people.

In the modern Kilba community, riddles seem to be a thing of the past. In semi urban areas, watching films have taken over riddling as entertainment game. Only in remote areas are riddles told in some compounds. There are many factors responsible for the dying out of the telling of riddles. The precious evening or night times used for riddling are now used for studies. In the modern Kilba community, it is great challenges for families that have not produce 'A' level school candidate nowadays prefer assigning their children to read rather than riddling. The advent of modern education has led to the gradual dying away of most of the cultural heritages.

In spite of the current positive developments among the Kilba people, there is great need to preserve or document some of the precious cultural heritages of the people for the present and the coming generations. The riddles presented are collected from villages. Some of them are obtained from natural settings. The writers listened to and recorded some of the riddles told by the children. The presented riddles are only those deemed as being of Kilba origin. The dynamic equivalent theory of translation was adopted because large amount of terms in Kilba language do exist in English. Attention was therefore, paid to meaning rather the word for word translation.

6. MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

The term structure in Linguistics refers to the different identifiable and meaningful language units. According to Radford (1989), Structure in Linguistics is found at the level of Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics. Morphology and syntax however are the most noticeable grammatical structures. These categories put together form the grammar of a language. The study of the structures of words is technically referred to as morphology, while that of the sentence is called syntax. The word syntax is derived from the Greek word syntaxis, which means arrangement. Morphology deals with word formation out of morphemes; while syntax on the other hand deals with phrase and sentence formation out of words (http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/vajda/ling201/test1materials/syntax.htm)

This means that morphology and syntax are inseparable in linguistics. The term morphology according to Aronoff and Fudeman (2005) is generally attributed to the German poet, novelist, playwright, and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), who coined it early in the nineteenth century in a biological context. Its etymology is Greek: *morph-* means 'shape, form', and *morphology* is the study of form or forms. In biology *morphology* refers to the study of the form and structure of organisms, and in geology it refers to the study of the configuration and evolution of land forms. In linguistics *morphology* refers to the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed.

Yule (2006) points out that the word morphology literary means 'the study of forms' which was originally used in biology, but, since the middle of the nineteenth century, has also been used to describe that type of investigation which analyzes those basic 'elements' which are used in a language. McGregor (2009) defines morphology as the examination of the internal structure of words, that is, how they can be divided into smaller meaningful units. In morphology words are referred to as either simple or complex. McGregor refers to the simple words as those that have no internal structure, while those that have internal structure are called complex words.

As a branch of linguistics, syntax looks at how words are combined to form a sentence. In other words, it is concerned with the arrangement of words or different components of a sentence. It encompasses the grammatical rules that are applied to units of a sentence such as phrases, clauses and sentences. Syntax as a branch of linguistics focuses on the analysis of the structures of a sentence. Tomori (1977) defines syntax as a branch of linguistics that deals with the study of grammatical structures of sentences built up of words, that is, how the different constituents of a sentence function together to communicate meaning. The Oxford Online Dictionary defines syntax as the study of how words are selected and arranged to form sentences. It looks at the rules of a language, particularly how the various parts of sentences go together. It is similar to morphology, which looks at how the smallest meaningful linguistic units, called morphemes are formed into complete words. Syntax examines how fully formed words fit together to create complete and understandable sentences. Understanding a language's syntax is important for understanding what makes a sentence grammatically correct (http://www.wisegeek.org/what-is-syntax.htm)

The brief definitions above present Morphology and Syntax as two related concepts forming the grammar of a language. While morphology deals with the investigation of how morphemes are combined to form words, syntax looks at how the words are combined to form sentences. Put together, morphology and syntax deal with the study of the forms of a language.

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We based our study on the theory of systemic functional Linguistics. The theory of systemic grammar was developed as reaction to structural and transformational generative grammars. Both theories claimed that meaning has no place in grammar (Lamidi 2000). The development of the theory started with the work of Bronislaw Malinowski, a Polish anthropologist who based much of his work in England. In his work, he emphasized the role of context of situation in language study. He opined that to fully understand an utterance, understanding the "context of situation" of that utterance is highly important. J.R Firth built upon the work of Malinowski. He established linguistics as a discipline in Great Britain and with his followers founded the London School of linguistics, since they were mostly based in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Firth picked up Malinowski's idea about the centrality of the context of situation, and applied it throughout his linguistic model.

Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) is an approach to language developed mainly by M.A.K. Halliday in the U.K. during the 1960s, and later in Australia. The approach is now used world-wide, particularly in language education and for purposes of discourse analysis. While many of the linguistic theories in the world today are concerned with language as a mental process, SFL is more closely aligned with Sociology: it explores how language is used in social contexts to achieve particular goals. In terms of data, it does not address how language is processed or represented within the human brain, but rather looks at the discourses we produce (whether spoken or written), and the contexts of the production of these texts. Because it is concerned with language use, SFL places higher importance on language function (what it is used for) than on language structure (how it is composed).When describing language, two important kinds of relations can be addressed:

1. **Syntagmatic relations**: concerning the ordering of linguistic elements within

a larger unit;

2. **Paradigmatic relations**: concerning which language elements can be substituted for each other in a particular context (Adopted from O'Donnell (2011/12) Systemic grammars basically set out the choices available in a particular language context.

The grammar also describes the possible syntagms (sequences of elements) that could be produced. However, this description is broken up into smaller descriptions (realization statements), each associated with the particular structural choice that it realizes.

Based on the above distinctions, we decided to examine both the syntagmatic and paradigmatic features of the texts in the corpus. The syntagmatic relations as O'Donnell (20011/12 puts deals with the ordering of linguistic elements within a larger unit. The paradigmatic relations on the other hand, deal with which language elements can be substituted for each other in a particular context.

8. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The riddles subjected to analysis were randomly drawn from the Kilba community. The riddles were recorded at natural setting during riddling. They were transcribed and translated for analysis. We looked at the structures of the words in relation to analogies made to the referents in the riddles. We also looked at the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. The findings were then discussed and conclusions drawn.

9. MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

We based our analysis on two complementary approaches to morphology, analytic and synthetic. Aronoff and Fudeman (2005) opine that the analytic approach has to do with breaking words

down, and it is usually associated with American structural linguistics of the first half of the twentieth century. They explained further that:

These linguists were often dealing with languages that they had never encountered before, and there were no written grammars of these languages to guide them. It was therefore crucial that they should have very explicit methods of linguistic analysis. No matter what language we're looking at, we need analytic methods that will be independent of the structures we are examining; preconceived notions might interfere with an objective, scientific analysis. This is especially true when dealing with unfamiliar languages.

According to Aronoff and Fudeman(2005),the second approach to morphology is more often associated with theory than with methodology, perhaps unfairly. This is the synthetic approach. It basically says, "I have a lot of little pieces here. How do I put them together?" This question presupposes that you already know what the pieces are. So in a sense, analysis in some way must precede synthesis. Both analytic and synthetic approaches were combined in the analysis of the riddles form the corpus of this study.

The analysis of the texts in the corpus revealed that in each riddle, the proposer or questioner ties a knot. The 'knot' according to Jordan (1975) is concealed under obscure language, and whoever has to 'untied 'it must grasp the associations or similarities. In riddling, a knot is a descriptive statement that makes analogy to something. The subject according to Jordan may be anything within common experience—man, parts of the human body, animals, plant life, the heavenly bodies, etc.

10. NOVEL AND KEY WORDS

In riddling, novel and key words are of paramount importance to the framing and obscuring information. The novel and key words in a riddles are obscured in a metaphorical description. This is to challenge the listener to use his ingenuity to puzzle out the solution. The following are examples.

    (i)   Jawa: Ya ghadliya **tsər** da mututu, maya zəbiya mbudla shong

         Wuma:**Sasəlga**

Proposer: I crushed my **beans** thoroughly white but when I got up in the morning

        all have disappeared. Answer:**Stars**

    (i)   Jawa: **Bəlam** kwa dəɓa ku a atsəla. Answer: **Tlaku**

       Proposer: **A baboon** is malingering in reeds. Answer: **Sickle**

    (ii)   Jawa:**Pəlasari** dəzəu kwa newu nya dəl-nya dəl Answer: **Dəndəhu**

       Proposer: **A red Fulani** that roams the river bank. Answer: **Brown ants**.

The subjects of the above knots beans, a baboon, and red Fulani are all within common experiences of the answerer. The answerer is expected to use his ingenuity to provide the association or connotations which are stars, sickle and brown ants. From the three knots and their solutions, it can be concluded that subjects of the nodes and their solutions are context-bound. In other words, they are inventions from the peoples' common experiences

Novel words/subject	Connotation/association
Beans	Stars
Baboon	Sickle
Red Fulani	Brown ants

11. INFLECTIONS

Morphology as a branch of Linguistics is broadly divided into two that is, inflection and word formation. Word formation is a morphological process that creates new words. Inflection on the other hand refers to the process of adding a bound morpheme to a stem word. The process relates to grammatical categories such as number (plural), tense (past or present, gender (feminine,

masculine) or neuter etc. Inflection provides information on grammatical structures. The analysis carried revealed that inflection is prevalent but commonly noticeable in the English versions. The following riddles show instances of inflections.

(i)   Jawa: Ya wal**nda** takulakə ɗa wal –wal biya tsa'a biya voa. Wuma: Laku

   Proposed: I **unroll**ed my cotton yarn up to Borno. Answer: Road

(ii)   Jawa: Dzakakə 'ya ka kwamɗa'**i** ku vii, ya kər naya kwa ndəra.Wuma: Val

   Proposed: I am together with my sister**s** in a room, but only I talk.

   Answer: Granaries

(iii)   Jawa: Maya nə**nda** tla ɗa mbwu də chii. Wuma: Təm dəfa

   Proposed: When I skinn**ed** my cow, ''mbwu' said the skin

   Answer: A pot of cooking loaves.

(iv)   Jawa: Kwatam gəf tøl ta'iu.Answer: Dugwa ana uhi

   Proposed: The princess is ly**ing** down while the chief is st**anding**

   Answer: Beans and corn plants

(v)   Jawa: Ku ɗa dodə dləma ya zhang sə'i mba. Wuma:Kata

   Proposed: My goat**s** are many in pen, but one rope ties them

   Answer: Beats/broom

Inflection in riddle 1 as shown boldly is for tense distinction (past); in riddle 2 is for number (plural), in riddle 3 is for tense (past); in riddle 4 is for tense, while in riddle 5 is for number. As shown in the sampled riddles, inflection for tense and number are prevalent.

12. SYNTAGMATIC RELATIONS (SENTENCE STRUCTURES)

12.1 Declarative sentences

In this subsection, we examined the structures of the riddles, that is, how words are combined to form larger units. The analysis carried depicted that most of the riddles are declarative sentences. Though riddles are framed in obscured language, those in declarative sentences are still comprehensible. The following are the samples of the declarative sentences:

(i)   Jawa: **Babasalam** kwa dlakə *shipəli* tə wulea. Wuma: Gabusa

   Proposed: **A giant** is hanging *testis* on the neck. Answer: Pawpaw tree and its fruits

(ii)   Jawa: Blam kwa dəɓa ku atsəla. Wuma: Tlaku.

   Proposed: **A baboon** is malingering in the reeds. Answer: sickle'

(iii)   Jawa: Shalla kwatama a tədə kəla hubwa. Wuma: Ngumbwam kucha'a

   Proposed: **A princess' calabash** fell without breaking. Answer: A ball of dead

   palm fruit

(iv)   Jawa: **Kyawa tsəf-tsəf ɗa** kwa nəwu kər dəggəl- kər dəggəl: Wuma:Tsəvər

   Proposed: **A striped calabash of mine** follows one hill brow to another

   Answer: Guinea fowl.

The subjects of the knots are in bold prints. Though presented in obscure language, they are things within the experiences of the answerer. A descriptive statement characterizing the subject is made in a puzzled way so that the answerer is challenged.

12.2 Complex and compound sentences

The analysis of the riddles also revealed that complex and compounded knots are prevalent. Some of the knots consist of two or more descriptive statements. In such elaborate sentences, an analogy is made to two or more things characterizing the concealed referent.

(i)   Yawa: Wu dà tarwadə ana virr fə hi ba'a,ba'a,**ya** á də da kwa nawu gii tə Wuma:Uhi

Proposed: A tree of mine is very tall, with foot rests clearly, **but** nobody can climb it.

Answer: Corn plant.

(ii)   Jawa: Ya ghadliya tsirr dà mututtu,**ma** ya zəbiya mbudla shong. Wuma: Sasəlga

Riddle:I crushed my beans tho, á roughly, when I got up in the morning, all were not in sight.

Answer: Stars

(iii) Jawa: Eak ul-ula, á həti eak ul-ula gii tsaku ku wuah ul-ula

Wuma: Məkəsəu

Riddle: A dry bird took up a dry bird, **and** ate it up a dry tree.

Answer: A tong

The above sentences have modifiers characterizing the subjects as well as connectives linking the ideas expressed in them. In riddle 1 above for instance, the noun 'tree' is pre -modified by an indefinite article 'a' and post modified by a prepositional phrase 'of mine', a quantifier 'very tall' and another prepositional phrase 'with foot rests clearly'. This complex description aims to obscure the subject, thereby challenging the listener. If there are footrests clearly, why is it that nobody can climb it? The answer relates to the description, that is, corn plant.

In knot 2, the riddler used beans to connote stars. The whiteness of beans is associated with stars. The disappearing of the beans in the morning is a metaphorical reference to the absence of stars in the day time. Similarly, the questioner metaphorically referred to a tong-an instrument that black smiths use for removing iron from fire when forging hoe, axe or any other instrument.

12.3 Interrogatives

 It was observed that all the riddles in interrogative sentences are devoid of obscuring descriptions. This implies that they are straighter than those in other types of sentence. The following are examples:

(i)   Jawa: Mi ko nədə dà dzana? Answer: Nya:

Proposed: Why do you look at me fool? Answer: Opened door

(ii)   Jawa: Ga nji nnga gii kwa hadə nya vii nya? Wuma: chirr

Will people of the upper region close the door today? Answer: Nose.

(iii)   Jawa: Mi dəgə dà ámá? Mi dəgə dà ádá? Wuma: Bərah

Proposed: Why did mother beat me? Why did father beat me? Answer: Millstone.

13. CLAUSE

Systemic grammar recognises the clause as the second on rank scale. The riddles subjected to analysis showed that both dependent and independent clause are prevalent in riddling by the Kilba folk. In this section, we discussed dependent clauses since the independent clauses have been captured under sentences as the highest on rank scale. The dependent clauses contain additional information on the independent clauses. They usually occur either at the beginning or end of an independent clause. The following riddles illustrate the occurrences of independent clauses in riddling by the Kilba folk.

(i)   Jawa: Ya ghadliya tsər da mututu**, maya zəbiya mbudla shong:** Wuma: Sasəlga

Proposed: I crushed my beans thoroughly white, **when I got up in the morning all have disappeared**. Answer: Stars

(ii)   Jawa: Gəziya ɗa sarah ya ama, **yo ɗəh ndəu.**   Answer: Gəlu'u

Proposed: Hold me my waist very tight mother, **while I eat somebody.** Answer: Hoe

(iii)   Jawa: **Maya səya babər** ,kinda cha, **maya səya gabala**, kinda cha.Wuma: Pəchi.

When I went to Babər, it was there. *When I went to Gabala*, it was there.Answer: The sun.

As can be seen from the above texts, the dependent clauses complement the independent clauses, thereby making the knots complex.

14. GROUP

In systemic Linguistics, a phrase is referred to as group. The groups are named after the classes of words or parts of speech in traditional grammar. We have nominal group, adjectival group, prepositional group, verbal group etc. The analysis carried out revealed that groups are prevalent in riddling especially the answers. This is probably because the answerers do not obscure the solution but attempts to make their responses explicit. The riddles below are examples.

(i)   Jawa: Kurkurwi a mar təlɓəu. Answer: **Himi**

Proposed: A quill in front of an ant hill. Answer: **The Ears**

(ii)   Jawa: Bəra ha'a ɗa hi məh chari Wuma: **Himi**

Riddle. A millstone of mine at a hill of stork.Answer: **The Ears**

(iii)   Jawa: Zər Tagui kəla nya: Hihii

A little Tagui without mouth: Egg

15. PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS

In this subsection, we examined language elements that can be substituted for each other in riddling. There are several words that can be substituted for each other in context. Where substitution is possible, ambiguity may also be possible which could result to disputes and argument over the answer. This happens where a riddle has two acceptable answers. The following riddles are example.

(i)   Yawa: Kuɗa chabə dləma, ya zhang səi mba nda. Wuma: Kata/tlafa

Proposed: My goats are many in the pen, but one rope ties them.

 Answer: Beats/broom

(ii)   Jawa: Áda ɗa gəf ku vii, amah tənngha cha biya. Wuma: Hibəkəu/err

Proposed: My father lies in the room, but his beard is outside:

 Answer. Maize cob/smoke

In the first riddle, the goats connote beats which are hanged on a single string. The goats could also connote sticks of broom which are tied with a single string. In the second riddle, the father may connote maize in its cob which has its hair like partly outside or a lit fire in a hut which releases smoke through the thatch.

There are also situations where riddles are structured in different ways but have the same answer. The variation in structure could be due to the differences of experiences of the Kilba folk from one geographical zone to the other. The following are examples:

(i)   Jawa: Dəggə dləbwal mar wua: Wuma:ibi

Proposed: Playing drum behind the tree. Answer:stool

(ii)   Jawa: Əhəng tanəkə ada ya? Wuma: Ibi

Proposed: Oh, were you here father? Answer: stool.

We examined the function of the riddles based on O'Donnell(2011/2012) functional orientation levels. According to O'Donnell, functional orientation generally means 'focus on

what language does is more important than looking at how it does it (its structure). The four levels stipulated by O'Donnell include:

15.1 Functional level for syntactic elements

This looks at the organization of grammar not only in terms of classes of unit but also in terms of functions. The analysis of the text in the corpus of the study showed that every riddle is based on a subject which the proposer metaphorically describes. The subject sometimes serves as the actor if an action is performed. The patient or the experiencer is also often stated. Examples are as follows:

(i)   Jawa: Ngguli k ə'ya dəgə dang tə daggər yi.   Wuma: yir

Proposed:My kinsmen play drum through the back: Answer:Cricket

(ii)   Jawa:Gəjam tsəla mbukətərwi: Wuma- Ibi

Proposer: An old rejected basket: Answer:stool

15.2 Orientation Towards the Functions Each Utterance Serves ('Speech Functions')

In SFL, each utterance is assigned a speech function (similar to speech act labels in other approaches), e.g., *giving information* (statement), *demanding information* (question), *demanding action* (order) or *offering* action (offer, promise, etc.)

It was observed that there are two common speech functions prevalent in riddling; these are demanding information and giving information. The questioner frames a riddle in order to demand for information from the answerer. On the other hand, the answerer gives information. In riddling context, the questioner ties the knots, while the answerer unties the knots

15.3 Views texts as a whole as serving distinct social functions (conveying information

and establishing/maintaining social relations).

Riddling as a game serves distinct social functions. It serves as source of entertainment, teaching and test of ingenuity. Social relations are established between the questioner and the answerer. The questioner frames a riddle to which the connotation is provided by the answerer. In Kilba community, riddling enables children to establish social relationship. The questioner throws riddles continuous until the answerer fail to provide connotation. He gives the wife or husband to the answerer. Thereafter, he becomes the answerer, while the answerer becomes the questioner.

15.4 Language is functional

The analysis carried out depicted that language is used to do many things. In the riddling game, language is manipulated to entertain, educate or train the mind.

16. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the morphological features was based both on analytic and synthetic approaches. The words are looked at as a product of experiences of the Kilba folk. Novel words functioning as the subject therefore are often used in riddling to create obscurity. The patient or the experiencer in the predicate is a metaphorical description of something which the answerer is expected to puzzle out. The result of the analysis at the morphological level also showed that inflections are prevalent. Inflections for tense distinction (present or past) were identified. This depicted the fact that riddling can be based on the present or past human experiences.

(i)   Jawa: Ya sə kwaɗa biya voa, nggə cha shilli na hudə ku ta cha. Wuma: Answer: Guga

I sen**t** my daughter to Borno, and she return**ed** pregnant. Answer: Water drawing skin or rubber bag.

(ii)   Jawa:Ngguli kə'ya kwa dəggə dang tə dagər yi. Wuma: yirr.

My kinsman is play**ing** drum through the back: Answer: Crickets

The two examples show inflection for past and present (progressive).

The syntagmatic relations examined revealed a prevalent use of active declarative sentences in riddling. The subjects are usually things within the common experiences of the folk but loaded in obscure language. The metaphorical presentations are intended to challenge the answerer to use his ingenuity to puzzle out the connotation or association of the subject. The examination of the syntagmatic relations also depicted a prevalence of complex and compound sentences. Riddles with these structures embody two or more statements characterizing the obscured referent. It was observed that the questioner always makes sure that a knot is tied well to challenge the answerer. On the other hand, the questioner uses his dexterity and ingenuity to puzzle out the connotation. The riddle 'A giant is hanging testis on the neck' for instances, can be analysed thus: The obscured giant is the pawpaw tree; while the test is that it is hanging on the neck refers to its fruits.

Three instances of the use of interrogations were identified. It was observed that the interrogations do not contain descriptive statements that contribute to making a knot complex. They require little of the ingenuity of the answerer to untie a knot.

The result of the analysis carried out showed only two instances of the use of imperative sentence in riddling. This implies that riddling is best done in obscured language. Imperatives are best used for issuing commands or directives.

(i)   Jawa: Mbel nda amá tsəkəti hihii. Answer: Owada həba

Proposed: Push the mother and collect the eggs. Answer: Banbara nuts plant

(ii)   Jawa: Tliya kum fəkər ngəhya: Wuma: Tə ibi ana tədńda ɗəl

Proposed: Cut meat and place a knife upon it. Answer: Defecating and cleaning the anus.

The riddles are directives. They connote removal of the Banbara nut plant before carefully tilling the surface of the earth to collect the nuts.

Finally, it was noted that there are language features that can be substituted for each other in riddling contexts. This agrees with the belief of the proponents of systemic linguistics that language functions in particular context and culture. Substitutions can be in the structuring of a riddle, technically referred to as tying a knot or the answering known as untying the knot. A riddle may be structured in two different ways but have the same answer. The following are examples:

(i)   *Jawa:* Ndəur mələm nyang na hirr ku lewa: Wuma: Shikəɗi

        Proposed: A mad man in the bush with his teeth outside. Answer: Thorns.

(ii)   Jawa: Məzəmakə Kwapər kwa hah kum titikər: Wuma: Shikkəɗ

        A hunter of Kwapər that shoots games upwards.   Answer: Thorn

It was observed also that a single knot may have two answers that can be substituted for each other. The riddle below is an example:

Yawa: Kuɗa chabə dləma,ya zhang sə'i mba nda: Wuma: Kata/tlafa

My goats are many in pen, but one rope is tying them. Answer: Beats/broom.

The study has revealed that language substitution in riddling among the Kilba folk is common. However, where there is a gap in the experiences of the participants, dispute or disagreement may arise over the answers.

17. CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that riddling requires good understanding of both the structures of words sentences as well as the context in which the game is played. It was against this back ground that the analysis of the morphology, syntax and functions of the Kilba folk riddles were embarked upon. The analysis of the riddles in the corpus was based on the theory of systemic Linguistics. Analytical and synthetic approaches were used to analyse the morphological features of the riddles. It could be drawn from the analysis that most of the subjects of the riddles are things within the experiences of the Kilba folk. They are intentionally obscured in descriptive statements

to challenge the answerer. The analysis of the morphological features also showed prevalence of inflection for number and tense.

At the syntagmatic level, it can be concluded riddling is done in almost all the types of sentences. Instances of the use of declarative, complex/compound, interrogative and imperative sentences were identified. It could also be drawn from the study of the syntagmatic relations that clauses and groups form vital structures in riddling. The study of the paradigmatic relations has established a fact that substitution of one linguistic form for another is possible in riddling by the Kilba folk. Sometimes two different knots may have one connotation. Likewise, a knot may have two connotations. It could be concluded that such situations may lead to ambiguity and disputes over the appropriateness of the structures of the riddles or the connotations.

Finally, the study has revealed some of the significance of playing riddle games in Kilba community. Like any other community in Nigeria, the Kilba folk use riddles for entertainment, teaching and testing ingenuity as well as intellectual capacity for creativity.

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